

News from the Slaughter House Slum, Bangkok. Sent with love.

*To assist the children today
Help themselves tomorrow.*

Presentation Bangkok Slums Mission

Feast of the Holy Innocents
28th December 2007

Greetings dear Friends, Benefactors, Volunteers, Sisters
And all who support us in our work in the Bangkok slums especially in the slums of
Khlong Toey.

It is a long time since a Newsletter went out from Rong Muu – my sincere apologies.
Hopefully I'm back on track with a little more order in my life! This of course may
require a miracle!

Firstly, I hope:

*Christmas was a very special and happy occasion for each of you, your family and
friends a time of Peace and much Joy.*

May the year of 2008 be for you all that you hope?

Day and night, early morning and late into the evening the needs of the people because
of their poverty are laid out right here on the doorstep of Nano's Place. They need rice,
something to eat with the rice, an old lady is in need of a blanket now that the cool
season is upon us, a mosquito net for a family of six. One lady needs a new ID card the
print on the old card is no longer legible – wiped off with use! Cost – 40 baht! Her
brother now 57 has not possessed an ID card for 33 years! Prior to this he worked and
supported himself now he's unable – he too must go to the District Office, the cost to
him 300 baht! An old lady 63 and living alone has not paid her rent for 2 months – she
needs 2,600 baht (cost of water and electricity are included); next month rent is due on
1st January, 2008. These were this morning's calls each one a neighbour of mine, I live
among them, with them – I know them! I know they're genuine. You, through your
assistance one way or another, many through direct donation have enabled us to help
each of these people and not just this particular group from the Slaughter House Slum
but hundreds of others too. I thank you – all our people thank you.

Six months ago I wrote: "I've just come into Nano's Place, my home in the Rong
Muu Slum after spending time with the littlest of wee babies, weighing barely

2,000 gm. He came home this evening – still one month before his time! Seven days ago his Mum had a caesarian section and two days later she was home. His twin brother barely survived five months; his name must be “Aa” as this little man red all over with long skinny arms and legs’ flailing in all directions is “Um”! He has a new foam mattress mosquito net, coverings for his bed, he like his Mum and dad will sleep on the floor. Nappies, two feeding bottles, baby formula, brush to keep his bottles clean, clothing that any little baby needs and 6-pairs of tiny home-made knickers (all the way from W.A.) plus toiletries for “Um” and his Mum. Thank you.”

I’ll do my best to keep you posted on this wee gift of life to our slum community. I must tell you though three other new babies joined “Um” in quick succession! Two boys and a girl! Right now they’re doing fine!

Back to the present: “Um” is now 6-months old weighing in at nearly 7 kg. He’s been having small amounts of solid food sometimes not so small, a combination of ripe banana and slightly over-cooked rice well mashed and mixed together. Like all slum babies he rarely smiles, almost never gurgles, chortles or laughs – slum children rarely laugh! They cry a great deal!

The new academic year for 2007 commenced in May. Contributions to the Uniform Project enabled us to assist over 600 students. The Australian Embassy through the Discretionary Fund gave us 100,000 baht and the Australian New Zealand Women’s Group provided another 100,000 Baht. Uniforms are compulsory. If the uniform is not complete the students know not to attend school. On the first and second day of the term parents were told by teachers: “If you’ve not paid the fees for your child’s books and the exercise books do not send the child to school!” The amount a parent may need for just one child is often equal to a third of the family’s monthly income. Students attending Government schools have received quite considerable assistance this past year for which we’re all grateful however I do need to add that this was very quickly balanced out by an increase in the cost of living especially that of food, a substantial increase in fares on public transport with little or no increase of wages for temporary and/or part-time workers which almost all our workers are.

Lek is well into term 2 of his 3rd year of University studies. He worked with me over most of the summer holiday period and now joins me on Tuesdays for the 2xF Programme when 112 students are given assistance with fares plus lunch and/or breakfast money to cover their needs for the following school days. No matter how much we contribute towards books, school fees, insurance, camp fees and all the rest that schools can list as essentials to be paid for it will mean nothing when they have not eaten or they lack the fares to/ from school each day! [2xF=Fares & Food]

I do not see the “2XF” Project nor the “Milk Run” Project as “welfare” but rather as an essential part of the total “Education Programme”

The health and the well-being including Medical care of the children and the students I also consider an important part of the overall "Education Programme".

Every 2nd Thursday Lek also assists with the lifting and packaging into the truck of the baby Formula purchased for the "Milk-Run" the following day.

New Year's Day he will join me as we share out "Food Packs" and gifts among the very poor especially the elderly.

Thawatchai now living at the Mercy Centre is in Grade 1 at the local Catholic Primary School. He's very small for his age (8 years). At the beginning of this year he was between 12 – 13 kg and so has been under the doctor. Just this last month he topped 16kg. Dr. was pleased and so were we!

While it is at all possible every child, older students, and adults too who are very poor and live in slum conditions will be accepted into the "Education Programme". Last year two adults came requesting assistance to attend week-end Adult Education classes! A first and I rejoiced! They are receiving the assistance requested plus the encouragement to continue their studies.

Finally for some excellent news:

Sasitayapon (Ann) From the Lock 10 Community is our first Graduate from the Redemptorist Vocational School in Pattaya. Ann commenced her studies in November 2004 and graduated in January 2007. Her English is good and she's an excellent student a good all-rounder loves Thai dance, swimming and other sports. Ann has had full-time employment since the completion of her studies.

Pornthip: From the Lock 10 /Rong Muu Community Graduated from University in January of this year. She's on a year's work experience her hope being she'll get permanent full-time work at the beginning of 2008. We first gave assistance to Pornthip in 1997. She would have been 13 years of age.

Suchart, From the Rong Muu Community is a young man of 26 years graduated from University towards the end of October this year. We've been assisting him with University fees plus his fares to and from University for the past five years. He has permanent, full-time work with a shipping Company.

Congratulations to our three University Graduates!

Well done!

We're very proud of you

And wish you

Every success and happiness in the future.

Of course we have a dream! We hope that many more students will continue their studies as far as they are able whether it be Vocational and/or Technical Training or like others will accept the challenge of university studies.

We look forward to the day when we're able to say: "Congratulations!" to our Post-Graduate Students from the Khlong Toey slums.

Thank you for all the assistance and support you've given us. It's only because of your generosity and support that the students from the slums are able to continue their education and I promise you every effort is made to put your hard-earned cash into Projects that will truly benefit our slum people.

On behalf of the students and all others who benefit from your kindness we say a sincere "thank you" and we ask the Good Lord to bless you as only He knows how.

Yours sincerely

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